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**Michigan: Decline in Detroit**

If ever a city stood as a symbol of the dynamic U.S. economy, it was Detroit. It was not pretty. It was, in fact, a combination of the grey and the garish: its downtown area was a warren of dingy, twisting streets; the used-car lots along Livernois Avenue raised an aurora of neon. But Detroit cared less about how it looked than about what it did—and it did plenty. In two world wars, it served as an arsenal of democracy. In the auto boom after World War II. Detroit put the U.S. on wheels as it had never been before. Prosperity seemed bound to go on forever—but it didn't, and Detroit is now in trouble.

Detroit's decline has been going on for a long while. Auto production soared to an alltime peak in 1955—but there were already worrisome signs. In the face of growing foreign and domestic competition, auto companies merged, or quit, or moved out of town to get closer to markets. Automation began replacing workers in the plants that remained. In the past seven years, Chrysler, the city's biggest employer, has dropped from 130,000 to 50,000 workers. At the depth of the 1958 recession, when Detroit really began reeling. 20% of the city's work force was unemployed. Even today, the figure is an estimated 10%, and the U.S. Government lists Detroit as an area of "substantial and persistent unemployment.''

On the Dole. During Detroit's decay, much of the city's middle class has packed up and headed for the suburbs. Since 1950, Detroit has had a population drop of 197,568 from 1,849,568 to 1,652,000, while the suburbs, counting arrivals from elsewhere, have jumped by more than 1,000,000. Detroit's population decrease would have been even more drastic but for an influx of white and Negro workers from the South. In the past ten years, Detroit's Negro population has risen from 300,506 to 482,000.

With little education or training, Detroit's new arrivals have had to scramble for any job they could get. But in their desperation to find work at any wage, they have crowded out thousands of the city's longtime residents; more than 70% of the 61,692 persons on relief have lived in Detroit since before 1950. Children under three get an allowance of $5.50 a week for food, an active adult gets $10.60. The city also pays for fuel, rent and clothing. Counting city and state funds, welfare payments in Detroit this year will total around $28 million, compared with $8,197,000 in 1952.

Creeping Blight. Here and there in Detroit are hopeful eddies. Wayne State University is defiantly building a modern campus right in the heart of the city. But blight is creeping like a fungus through many of Detroit's proud, old neighborhoods. Vast areas have been leveled for redevelopment projects that have not materialized. Down on the waterfront, the city's $70 million Cobo Convention Hall and Arena is not attracting the anticipated crowds of fast-spending conventioneers, this year failed to meet expenses by $285,000.

In all. Detroit has lost $16 million in taxes in the past four years. The nonprofit Citizens Research Council of Michigan warns that Detroit is headed for a $15 million deficit in its 1961-62 budget.

United Effort. The man who has genially stood watch over much of Detroit's decline is Mayor Louis Miriani, 64, a competent but complacent bureaucrat who has held office since 1957. Miriani wants the Michigan legislature, dominated by Republicans to help by voting more state relief funds or by at least passing the bills to let Detroit get more federal aid. Says Miriani: "That's where we need help—at the state level."

This year, Miriani is facing serious opposition in Detroit's nonpartisan mayoralty race. His opponent: Lawyer Jerry Cavanagh, 33, who describes Miriani as a ''ceremonial figurehead who presides over the abandonment of the city." Cavanagh talks of attracting new industry, capturing a bigger slice of the St. Lawrence Seaway trade, and, if need be, leveling an income tax on anyone—including suburbanites—who makes money in Detroit.

But many Detroiters would agree that the city cannot be saved by a mayor alone. Its problems run so deep that they can be solved only by the effort of labor, management, -'government and citizenry—working in a spirit that once made Detroit the symbol of economic dynamism. Says Henry Ford II: "Detroit admittedly has its problems—intelligent citizen interest and action can solve them. As I see it, the vital need now is for the people themselves to become interested in the community and government, and to take an active part in their affairs."